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AN ANALYSIS OF

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

(TITLE)

BY

LINDA SEATON

PLAN B PAPER

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION
AND PREPARED IN COURSE

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS PLAN B PAPER BE ACCEPTED AS
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AN ANALYSIS OF

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to discuss, in detail, how Wuthering Heights could be written, and to discuss what has made it one of the greatest novels of all time.

The research for this paper was done for a literary criticism class taught by Mr. Blair. I would like to express my appreciation to him for the many constructive comments he made.

I would, also, like to express my thanks to the Eastern Illinois University Library and the Illinois State Library for making available to me the materials necessary to complete this paper.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is prepared to discuss the literary values which have made Wuthering Heights such an outstanding work. At the time of its first publication, critics were sure that such a book must be the product of a perverted mind. There was no model for it anywhere in Victorian literature, so they felt that it was a work of little or no value. Why has the opinion of the literary merit of the novel changed?

There are many questions which people have about the book. How could any one, least of all a woman, write such a composition? Where did she gain a knowledge of such people? What is the theme? Why is it a great novel? I believe that if one can answer these questions, one can understand why W. Somerset Maugham, and most other critics, place it among the ten best novels in all literature.

Emily Jane Bronte was born in 1818 and died in 1848. Her father, the Reverend Patrick Bronte, married Marie Branwell, the daughter of a Cornish trader. Marie presented him with five daughters and one son. The children were named Marie, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Patrick Branwell, Emily Jane, and Anne. The two older girls, Marie and Elizabeth, died while away at school. Charlotte, Emily, Branwell, and Anne pursued, with varying degrees of success, literary careers.

The family moved to the parsonage in Haworth, Yorkshire, in 1820. The family happiness at their advancement was short-lived. Mrs. Bronte died in September, 1821, leaving six children under the age of nine. After Mrs. Bronte's death, her sister Elizabeth came to care for the children. Haworth, located on the brow of a hill overlooking the moors, was their home for almost all the rest of their lives. It was here that the children entertained themselves by wandering about the moors and by writing poems, essays, and romances.

It had been generally accepted that Emily was greatly influenced by those people around her, and by her readings of German romances. Some critics suggested that she used her father as a basis for her descriptions of Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff. Perhaps a brief discussion of those persons closest to Emily will help us to understand why she was able to write such a novel during the era in which she lived and wrote.

Tabitha Aykoyd, affectionately nicknamed Tabby by the children, became a servant in the parsonage while in her late fifties. She stayed at the parsonage until her death. She loved the children, and may have been the one who listened to their problems. She had a keen mind and a sharp tongue. She probably supplied Emily with many stories of the locality and the people who lived in the neighborhood. She appears to have been a twin sister to Nelly Dean. If this is true, she plays an important part in Emily's literary life.

The Reverend Patrick Bronte was a strange, lonely man. After the family moved to Haworth, he would go for long solitary walks over the moors. With the exception of his family, his parishioners, and a neighboring parson who came to visit him on various occasions, he saw no one. Even when his wife was alive, he would eat his meals alone in his study, only coming out to read the evening prayer at eight o'clock each evening, and to lock and bar the door at nine o'clock. He was described as a violent, selfish man who treated his wife and children with coldness and neglect, but on various occasions, he skillfully told eerie, macabre stories which Emily enjoyed. He may have been a strange man, but he loved and respected his children and was proud of their talents.

The two oldest girls had little effect upon Emily's work; however, their deaths at Cowan Bridge, a school established to educate the daughters of poor clergymen, was used in Jane Eyre. This short time away from home was Emily's first experience away from home. After the deaths, Charlotte and Emily were returned home. The only education they received until they went to Brussels was the reading of English classics.

There has been little written about Anne Bronte. She served for a short time as the governess for the Ingrams of Blake Hall. Later, she served as governess to the Robinsons of Thorpe Green. She remained at the Robinson home until Mr. Robinson learned of the affair between Branwell and his wife.

Anne resigned when Branwell was dismissed. It was rumored that she fell in love with her father's curate, William Wrightman. Since he did not return her feelings, nothing came of the romance. Anne died of tuberculosis the year following Emily's death. She gained her fame, primarily, from being the sister of Emily and Charlotte.

Charlotte lived to see her brothers and sisters die. She had served as Emily's spokesman and Branwell's support. She had prepared herself as a governess. Her first school was at Roe Head, Drewsbury. She and Emily went to Brussels to study languages with Constantin Heger. Emily was unhappy there, but Charlotte, many biographers say, had fallen in love with Constantin. When Aunt Elizabeth died, she left her money to the girls. They returned to Haworth where Emily remained. Charlotte returned to Brussels for two years as a teacher at Pensionat Heger. When she returned home, the girls decided to use their money to begin their own school. They got no students; so, Charlotte took a position as a nursery governess. Since she did not like children, this was not pleasant for her. During these years, she had been writing, and finally published Jane Eyre. She married her father's curate, the Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls. After a honeymoon in Ireland, they returned to Haworth and made their home with her father. Nine months after her marriage, she died of consumption and complications from childbirth.

Branwell was the clever one. His father educated him himself. He was talented, precocious, and had an engaging manner about him. He had a flair for drawing and was eager to study art at the Royal Academy in London. It was never recorded whether he did study there or not, but there are records of his losing jobs for neglect of duties. His friend F. H. Grundy described him in the following manner:

He was insignificantly small--one of his life's trials. He had a mass of red hair, which he wore brushed high off his forehead--to help his height, I fancy--and great bumpy intellectual forehead, nearly one-half the size of the whole facial contour; small ferrety eyes, deep sunk and still farther hidden by the never removed spectacles, prominent nose, but weak lower features. He had a down cast look, which never varied, save for a rapid momentary glance at long intervals. A small and thin person; he was the opposite of attractive at first sight.¹

Branwell became a source of worry as well as expense to his family. He had taken to heavy drinking and gambling while earning no money to pay for his extravagances. He was engaged, in 1842, as a tutor, by Mr. Edmund Robinson, a wealthy clergyman. Mr. Robinson was an elderly invalid with a youngish wife. Although she was seventeen years his senior, Branwell fell desperately in love with her and she with him. No one knows the extent of the relationship, but they were discovered, and he was quickly exiled. Mr. Robinson ordered him "never to see again the mother of his children, never to set foot in her home, never to write or speak to her."² Branwell raved and

¹W. Somerset Maugham, The World's Ten Greatest Novels (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publishing, 1959), pp. 120-121.

²Ibid., p. 124.

swore that he could not live without her. He prayed that the old man would die so he and Mrs. Robinson might be happy. About this time, he added another vice to his drinking, the use of opium. "The romance had various stages. Liquor-stupefied days; drunken, suicide-raving nights; agonizing self-recrimination and remorse; bitter self-reproach; incessant money-wheedling for drinks and drugs; court summonses and sheriff's calls at the parsonage, initiated by Bradford and Halifax unpaid pubkeepers; and a melodramatization of his self-martyrdom."³ Eventually, Mr. Robinson died and Branwell happily prepared to go to his love. As he was leaving, two men came to tell him that Mrs. Robinson begged him not to come to see her again, for if she saw him, she would lose her fortune and the custody of her children. He quickly drank himself to death. "When he knew the end was come, wanting to die standing, he insisted upon getting up. He had only been in bed one day. Charlotte was so upset that she had to be led away, but her father, Anne, and Emily looked on while he rose to his feet and after a struggle that lasted twenty minutes died, as he wished, standing."⁴

In early years, he had written prose and verse; and some of his friends attributed to him a share in Wuthering Heights. Charlotte distinctly stated that he knew nothing

³Norma Crandall, Emily Bronte: A Psychological Portrait (Rendge, New Hampshire: Richard R. Smith, 1957), p. 107.

⁴Maugham, op. cit., p. 125.

about the novel. He was too much under the effect of drink, too besotted and muddled in his last days to be able to share his sisters' enthusiasm for their work.

Much has been written but little known about Emily Bronte. She was a strange shadowy figure who was never seen directly. She had no friends with whom to correspond, so only two of her letters remain, and these tell nothing about her personally. She was an uncomfortable person to be around, and would remain aloof. She did, however, love dogs, and would usually be accompanied on her walks by one or more. Mary Robinson, a school friend of Charlotte, described Emily in the following way:

At fifteen (she was) a tall, long armed girl, full grown, elastic as to tread; and a slight figure that looked queenly in her best dresses, but loose and boyish when she slouched over the moors, whistling to dogs, and taking long strides over the rough earth. A tall, thin, loose-jointed girl--not ugly, but with irregular features and a pallid thick complexion. Her dark hair was naturally beautiful, and in later days looked well, loosely fastened with a tall comb at the back of her head; but in 1833 she wore it in an unbecoming tight curl and frizz. She had beautiful eyes of a hazel colour. Like her father, her brother, and her sisters she wore spectacles. She had an aquiline nose and a large, expressive, prominent mouth. She dressed regardless of fashion, with leg-of-mutton sleeves long after they had ceased to be worn; in straight long skirts clinging to her lanky figure.⁵

Emily had never been happy away from home. After Branwell's death, she never left the house again, just as she had never left Haworth after returning when her aunt died. Shortly after Branwell's death, Emily began to cough. It was clear to

⁵Ibid., p. 126-127.

all of them that if she did not receive treatment, she would die. She would not listen to them. On the day she died, she had risen early and done some work about the house. She had nearly died standing up.

This, then, was Emily and the members of her family; the people who surrounded her all the days of her life. It was from her family and those people of the community around her that Emily drew her knowledge of people. Many people could not believe that a woman, especially a daughter of a minister, could write such a book. Yes, it was very possible for Emily to have the material and the mental attitude to write such a book as Wuthering Heights. Now, let us begin our discussion of this, one of the greatest novels of all time.

CHARACTERS

One will soon discover that Emily has presented a very limited cast of characters, but these characters are the personification of the theme of the story. Perhaps the easiest way to go about this discussion is to divide the characters into three classifications: those who are outside the family circle; the members of the Linton and Earnshaw families; and Heathcliff, around whom the story revolves. Emily has not drawn a clear picture of most of the characters as individuals, but we do get a clear picture of Nelly Dean, Joseph, Cathy, and of course, Heathcliff.

Because there has been so much discussion about Emily's use of two narrators, let us begin our discussion with Nelly Dean and Mr. Lockwood. Why did Emily decide to use narrators in her novel? This point was given a great deal of thought by biographers and critics. As we remember from the brief biography given in the preceding chapter, Emily was a retiring woman who never made friends while away from home. Also, we remember that Charlotte did all the talking for both of them. It would seem possible that a woman of such shyness could not bring herself to tell such a story, even in the third person. In fact, she probably found it difficult to tell a story of any kind to people she did not see and whom she did not know

personally. She would, thus, need someone to speak for her. For this reason, possibly, she began the book by using Mr. Lockwood as her spokesman. Soon, she realized that he was not developing in such a way that he could successfully tell a tale of such feeling. Another suggestion for the use of Nelly Dean as a second narrator was that Emily suddenly decided that the reader might associate Mr. Lockwood with Ellis Bell, the author, so she brought in the second spokesman to disassociate herself still farther from the activities going on in the book. For some reason, Emily decided to use two narrators, and used them quite effectively.

A closer study of Mr. Lockwood may help us understand why Emily felt she needed to add Nelly. Really, not much can be said for Lockwood. We were told that he was a visitor from the South who had rented Thrushcross Park from Mr. Heathcliff. We first look at Heathcliff through the eyes of this stranger who became curious about the events leading up to the strange behavior he observed while visiting at Wuthering Heights. His visit was caused by a snow storm which caused him to become ill. While he was ill, Nelly Dean took care of him and answered many of his questions. One would believe that he would be able to give us an objective view, since we know that he himself had experienced, during the past summer, an unhappy love affair. Instead of giving us an insight into what Heathcliff was feeling, we were exposed to his flirtation with Catherine. He was sure that she was fascinated with him.

Luckily, we were not long exposed to his love affair. She seemed to decide to get rid of him by having him become ill, and for a time, leaving the neighborhood. Whether she found that she could not raise Lockwood to the position to demand our respect while he told the tale, or whether she just decided to add another character, Emily deserted him as a major character..

Although she does not bother to develop the character of Lockwood, Emily is very careful to develop Nelly Dean as a person. Nelly Dean (at times called Ellen) is an almost perfect instrument for her purpose. She is a shrewd matron of Yorkshire heritage. She seems to be above her station in intelligence, very opinionated, gruff but loving to those she likes, and prejudiced against those she does not like. She is sturdy, sensible, kind, shrewd, and a good story-teller. She serves as a housekeeper, nurse, companion, and friend to the Earnshaws and Lintons. She is, however, not partisan and plays no favorites, unless it is toward the younger Catherine, and she is stern with her on many occasions. She clearly says that she does not like the elder Catherine, but often serves as her confidante. Also, she serves as a confidante for Heathcliff on occasions, but she never really becomes an active participant in the story because she never really influences any of the characters or determines any action.

From Nelly Dean, the old housekeeper, who was herself a part of all that happened, we get the moods, the suffering, the crises, through which the lovers passed. . . . In spite of her impatient

and censorious attitude toward Catherine, her bitter hatred of the savage Heathcliff, she draws us irresistibly to her by voice and gesture as she talks.⁶

Many critics have felt that the use of narrators is one of the major faults of this book. However this was not the first time such a technique had been used. The following paragraph suggests some of the reasons authors use the device:

It (the use of narrators) is a primitive device and, like all primitive techniques, it is effective partly because its very defects appear not as defects but as perfectly natural limitations. Its advantages are obvious. It permits a much greater freedom in presenting the facts than when they are set down in third person by the author. The author is presumed by the reader to know about his characters. The fictional narrator is not expected to know everything; it would seem unnatural if he seemed to know all. He cannot know all: he was not there at every point in the story as a real person, he could not have been there. Consequently, there is nothing odd in his being unable to explain certain things. He can get over any difficulty by saying: 'What happened, I don't know, but the next thing I knew was . . . ' and he can thus pass swiftly and with cogency, even though all sorts of links are left out, from one dramatic situation to another. He can ramble; he can digress; he can be quite informal; and his tale will be none the worse for being unevenly told. Its unevenness and uniformity will suggest the stamp of truth.

The last member of our cast of characters who is not a member, directly or indirectly, of the Linton or Earnshaw families, is Joseph, a hypocritical Methodist servant. He is

⁶William Stanley Braithwaite, The Bewitched Parsonage (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1950), pp. 171-172.

⁷Irene Cooper Willis, The Brontes (New York: MacMillan Co., 1957), pp. 112-113.

present during almost all of the story, serving to add detail to the background. He is carefully done and embodies everything harsh, repellent, egotistic, cold, bitter, cruel, and self-righteous. "Joseph exists in, of, for, and to himself; he may annoy, torment, or disgust the other persons in the story, but he affects neither their actions or their character."⁸

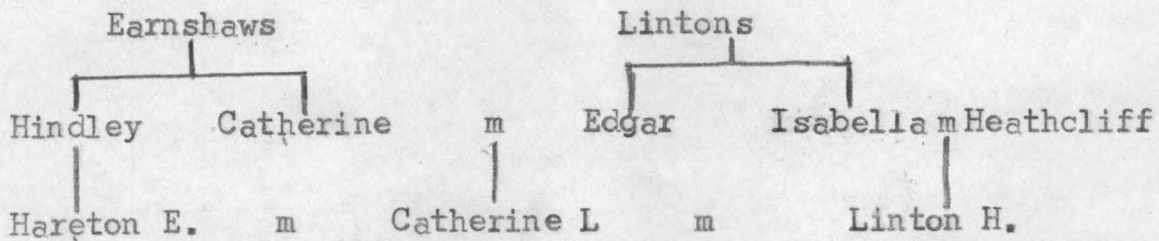
Most biographers believe that Joseph was a reflection of her father's description of Gallagher who had terrorized her grandfather during his boyhood in Ireland--the man who stood by while Hugh Bruntz was beaten for one of Gallagher's own misdemeanors; the man who quoted scripture to prove that the punishment was ordained. Joseph could have been based on such a man.

These three--the old servant Joseph, and the narrators Lockwood and Nelly--provide the human background and serve to clear the air. They help us observe the events and, in some cases, make clear to us the ideas Emily wished to convey. They are made into important beings, and are very necessary to the purpose of the novel.

We are now ready to begin our discussion of the members of the Linton and Earnshaw families. In order to help keep characters clear, we will begin this part of the discussion with a chart of family relationships, and then begin a more thorough discussion of each character as he is presented.

⁸Laura L. Hinkley, Charlotte and Emily (New York: Hastings House, 1945), p. 51.

Strangely enough, one finds that most of these characters are not really drawn in detail, until one comes to the discussion of the Elder Catherine. In fact, we never really are allowed to meet Hindley Earnshaw's wife, but we know she is there.



(The Younger Catherine marries first Linton and then Hareton)

It does not take long for Hindley to learn to hate and be jealous of the boy whom his father treats as well as, if not better than, he treats his own son. Often, with his mother watching, he mistreats Heathcliff, and speaks impolitely to him. After his father's death, he treats the outsider terribly. Out of this treatment comes part of Hindley's doom. Heathcliff learns to hate Hindley, and in later years, helps Hindley in his pursuit of drink and destruction. Heathcliff leaves the vicinity, but returns three years later with enough money to carry out his plans. After helping Hindley degrade himself, Heathcliff takes over the property, Wuthering Heights, which belonged to the the Earnshaw family. "Evil enters the story through Hindley. . . . Hindley is merely coarse-grained, self-assertive, self-indulgent rather brutal humanity following its propensities unhindered. He pays a bitter price."⁹

⁹Ibid., p. 339.

Isabella Linton, a girl of eighteen, meets Heathcliff and solicits his attention out of a combination of curiosity, sentiment, and physical desire. It is not unnatural that a young girl, pretty and pampered, living in a remote neighborhood with little choice of companionship, should fall in love with any presentable man whose history seems both romantic and heroic. She doesn't listen when those around her try to tell her what he is really like. It is possible that Heathcliff actually hates her for being so easily obtained, but she serves as an easy tool for his revenge. In a short time, they are throwing knives at each other. Before she leaves him, Isabella and Heathcliff produce one son, Linton, who also is a tool in the master scheme.

Linton Heathcliff inherited no admirable qualities from either of his parents. He was very like the Lintons in appearance. His health was poor; he was neglected by his parents; and he hated and was terrified of his father. He served as a tool for his father, who married him to young Catherine Linton. In this way, Heathcliff gained control of the Linton properties. Linton did not live long. He left Catherine to marry Hareton.

Catherine Linton was the daughter of Catherine Earnshaw and Edgar Linton. She was born as Cathy died; thus, she became doubly cursed in the eyes of Heathcliff. She was a gentler, more affectionate version of her mother. While she

lived with Heathcliff, she became very bitter because of her ill treatment. However she was happy at the end of the story because she and Hareton were married and Heathcliff had died and left them in peace. We were left with the assumption that the second generation of lovers will live a happy life together.

Hareton Earnshaw inherited traits from his father and from his grandfather. He inherited a certain viciousness from his father. This was shown when we were told that he was hanging puppies to kitchen chairs. From his grandfather, he inherited a capacity for kindness and understanding. Although Heathcliff mistreated him, he loved him and mourned his death. He inherited a capacity to love from his aunt Cathy. He loved Catherine although on most occasions, she was not even kind to him. When his father died, Hareton went to live with Heathcliff who made him suffer because he was Linton's son, and because he greatly resembled his aunt Cathy. When Heathcliff died, Hareton was the only person who mourned, and he wept inconsolably.

Edgar Linton was both fortunate and unfortunate when Catherine Earnshaw agreed to marry him. She was a beautiful woman who would make any man an attractive wife, but she did not love him. He was too weak and ineffectual to make a proper mate for Cathy. Although he could satisfy her desire for a gentleman of good breeding, he could not satisfy her desire for a man's man. Many critics have felt that Edgar

represented the good struggling against the evil of Heathcliff, and the good lost. Edgar lost his wife when she learned that she could not have both Edgar and Heathcliff. When she learned this, she just decided that the only way she could escape unhappiness was to die.

Catherine Earnshaw, usually called Cathy, was a wild unmanageable girl who grew up with Heathcliff as her most constant companion. She was bright, wayward, teasing, caressing, violent, wilful, proud, selfish, obstinate, vital, ambitious, perplexed, and self-confident. Through long association, she and Heathcliff become two people with but one soul. She made her final mistake in deciding to marry Edgar while admitting to Nelly that she really loved Heathcliff. She could not see why she could not have both men. She did not feel that she could marry Heathcliff because he was uneducated, unpolished, and without money. She felt that she could have Edgar's social position and Heathcliff's masculine love. When she found that this was impossible, she refused to eat and died in childbirth. Her unity of feeling with Heathcliff, however, did not end with her death. Her ghost returned to haunt him for the rest of his life.

This brings us to Heathcliff, one of the most powerful and most controversial characters in all literature. He appears to us as an evil man who is made evil through the treatment of the people around him. For one of the few times

in literature, at least up to the Victorian Era, the hero does not help virtue triumph over the evil in the world. In this case, one feels that evil has almost overcome good.

Is Heathcliff a tragic hero? As we recall, a tragic hero is a person of noble stature and good intent who, through a flaw in his character, commits some evil deed. Can this be applied to Heathcliff? First, we realize that we do not know anything about his background. He is described as being a black creature. Perhaps this means that he is a gypsy, but we are never told for sure. Secondly, we never really know what he might have been if he had not been ill treated from early childhood. Some critics suggest that his flaw is pride. They believe he can not stand to have Cathy see him exposed to such treatment, and that he desires to show her that he is as good as, or better than, Edgar. We might call this pride. I do not believe that one can call him a tragic hero, because we never really see him as an honorable person. We do, however, sympathize with and understand him.

How was Heathcliff accepted during the Victorian Era in which he appeared? Perhaps this can be learned from the following quotations from Charlotte's preface to Wuthering Heights:

Heathcliff exemplifies the effects which a life of continued injustice and harsh usage may produce on a naturally perverse, vindictive, and inexorable disposition. Carefully trained and kindly treated, the black gypsy-cub might possibly have been reared into a human being, but tyranny and ignorance made of him a mere demon. The worst of it is, some of

his spirit seems breathed through the whole narrative in which he figures: it haunts every moor and glen, and beckons in every fir tree of the Height.¹⁰

Heathcliff betrays one solitary human feeling, and that is not his love for Catherine; which is a sentiment fierce and inhuman; a passion such as might boil and glow in the bad essence of some evil genius; a fire that might form the tormented centre--the ever-suffering soul of a magnate of the infernal world; and by its quenchless and ceaseless ravage effect the execution of the decree which dooms him to carry Hell with him wherever he wanders. No; the single link that connects Heathcliff with humanity is his rudely-confessed regard for Hareton Earnshaw--the young man whom he has ruined; and then his half-implied esteem for Nelly Dean. These solitary traits omitted, we should say he was child neither of Lascar nor gipsy, but a man's shape animated by demon life--a Ghoul--an Afreet.¹¹

How do we see him today? Do we still see him as a character with only one redeeming feature? Do we see him as a monster? How can we reconcile his behavior with the way we believe people should behave?

Heathcliff is no more monstrous to us than he was to Emily. We see him, at first, as no more than an ill-used sullen boy, growing bitter under Hindley's ill treatment and Catherine's apparently uncertain affection and thoughtless coquetries; he disappears and we see him returned and faced with the irrevocable fact of Catherine's marriage to his loathed rival, Edgar Linton and her breakdown and death; we see Heathcliff's bitterness and rage hardening into relentless scheming to wreck the lives and capture the fortunes of both families . . . we see his almost complete triumph, his haunted pursuit of the mocking spirit of Cathy and his sudden tormented end. There are passages in which Heathcliff is described to seem

¹⁰Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. x.

¹¹Ibid., p. xxxviii.

literally diabolical, and his mysterious origin and dark, swarthy appearance as well as the supernatural elements of the story are in keeping with that impression of him. . . .¹²

It was part of his punishment that he had to stay away from the grave to level the earth to his will. Not until he had gained the world and found that it was nothing but dust in his hands did he leave that world for the outer world. "Not until he had won his world, and as the devil must, found all, not being God, was nothing, did he depart."¹³ When he no longer had a reason for living, a strange change came over him. He found that although he was hungry, he could not eat. He began to fade, and although his body fought to live, he died. His body as he had wished, was buried in that grave he had once opened. His body was placed in the grave with that other body with no wood or lead between them, but dust to dust, and bone to bone, they slept. "His body died in frightful exaltation upon that bed with the little window in it. The window was open, the rain streamed down upon him, but his ghost was gone to the other ghost to walk upon the moor. There in freedom he and she and liberty had undisputed sovereignty. There by the grace of God they wandered and wander still, but only by the grace of God. He was buried as he wished, close against his soul's body without benefit of clergy."¹⁴

¹²Willis, op. cit., pp. 119-121.

¹³Romer Wilson, Life and Private History of Emily Jane Bronte (New York: Albert and Charles Bone, 1958), p. 128.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 129.

There are many ideas suggested as to the origin of Heathcliff. One suggestion, which has had wide acceptance, is that Emily's model for him was her brother Branwell. This opinion is very difficult for me to accept. Branwell was such a weak person that I do not believe Emily would use him as a pattern for such a dynamic character as Heathcliff. She may, however, have used some of his ravings about his love for Mrs. Robinson.

Some biographers have advanced the idea that Emily used herself as a basis for both Catherine and Heathcliff. They suggest that she exposed two sides of her own character, desires, and feelings. That she reveled in their treatment of each other and their treatment of those around them is shown in the way that she heaped this abuse on all those involved.

No matter where Emily got her model for Heathcliff, she has given literature one of its greatest characters. She has shown him in his most evil and cruel times, and she has given us reasons for his conduct. These reasons are found in the theme of the entire novel. We realize that he is acting as no well-balanced person should, but that he is acting the way that he must. It is not within his control to act in any other way.

PLOT

Since we have finished our discussion of the characters presented in this novel, let us next discuss the plot. A plot is the plan or pattern of events or main story of a work of literature. Wuthering Heights is free of any contrived complications and surprises. In many ways, the plot is of secondary importance. The characters, or really, Heathcliff, seem to be more important than the story.

We find that this book really begins almost at the end. Most of the action has already happened, and is reported to us later. The novel is a diary written by a Mr. Lockwood who has rented Thrushcross Park from Heathcliff. Most of what he reports has been told to him by Nelly Dean, who has been present through all the events. Some of the details are given to us by Lockwood directly.

As the story opens, Catherine Earnshaw is already dead. Her ghost is not at rest, however, and seeks entrance to Wuthering Heights. Lockwood is walking one night when a snow storm forces him to seek sanctuary at Wuthering Heights. This is our first meeting with Heathcliff, and we, as well as Lockwood, are curious about what he finds there. He finds a library of books belonging to Catherine Earnshaw, and a manuscript in which she writes of Linton's behavior toward Heathcliff. She says that she and Heathcliff will rebel.

Later, he hears a branch hitting against the window. When he reaches out to seize the branch, his fingers close on a cold hand. "I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, 'let me in--let me in! . . . I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor:'"¹⁵ After Heathcliff has ordered him to leave the room, he stands outside the door and hears him sob, "Come in! Come in! Cathy, do come. Oh do--once more! Oh! my heart's darling; hear me THIS time, Catherine, at last!"¹⁶ What does all this mean?

Lockwood became ill, and Nelly Dean often came in to look after him. In order to fill his hours in bed, she told him the story of the lovers. Linton treated Heathcliff with cruelty. This treatment only added to the closeness between Linton's sister Catherine and the boy with whom she had grown up. Although Cathy loved Heathcliff with passion, she decided that she could not marry him. She told Nelly, "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire."¹⁷ Heathcliff heard only the early part of the comment and left. He stayed away for three years. When he returned, he found that Cathy

¹⁵Bronte, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 50.

had married Edgar. Catherine had assumed that she could have both men. She told Nelly that she could use her husband's money to remove Heathcliff from Hindley's hand. When he returned, he had gained an education and had come into some money. Because of this marriage, Heathcliff now lived only for revenge. He decided to use any method available to gain control of the property of the Earnshaws and the Lintons.

His method of acquiring the property was very interesting, and all done legally. On the death of their parents, Hindley took over all the family property, caring for his sister only because of custom and family pride. Cathy provided for herself when she married Edgar, who had taken all the family property from his sister Isabella. Their father's will stated that if Edgar died without heirs, Isabella would inherit the estate. Heathcliff knew this when he married Isabella. She escaped from him and reared their son Linton in another city. Heathcliff gained the Earnshaw property by playing on Hindley's vices of drink and gambling. At his death, Heathcliff claimed all the property and took Hindley's son Hareton into his home. When Isabella died, Edgar tried to bring Linton into his home and rear him with Catherine, hoping for a marriage to settle the property difficulty. Heathcliff, remembering the property angle, took Linton away. When Edgar and Linton were both near death, Heathcliff forced a marriage between Catherine and Linton. When Edgar died, he left his property to his daughter. Through the marriage, the property passed into Linton's hands

since he was Catherine's husband. When he died, he left the property, by will, to his father. Heathcliff now controlled all the property of the two families, and, in addition, had in his power the two surviving representatives. Slowly these two learned to love each other. When Heathcliff died, the property all went to his son's widow and to Hareton whom she had chosen to marry.

There was a similarity in the way Heathcliff and Cathy died. Catherine, in a fury at Edgar and Heathcliff, decided to make them both sorry by starving herself. For three days she refused to eat, and did not sleep at nights. During that time, Heathcliff had been busy planning his elopement with Isabella, and didn't know what was going on. Later, when his own time came, though he was in vigorous health, he found that he could not eat or sleep.

Lockwood and Hareton buried him beside Catherine, as he had wished. The natives believed that the lovers walked the moors arm in arm. Lockwood closed the book with the following comments about the lovers:

I lingered round them; under benign sky; watched the moth fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in the quiet earth.¹⁸

¹⁸Ibid., p. 212.

THEME

Wuthering Heights has a three-fold theme, all of which is personified in the characters. The theme of a piece of literature is the subject or topic being written about. The themes in Wuthering Heights are vengeance and retribution, love, and man's place in the cosmos.

That this is a novel of vengeance and retribution is acknowledged by most critics. As used by Emily, both are symptoms of unrestricted passion. The act of vengeance and the inevitability of retribution are the result of disobeying natural laws; and the marriages of Heathcliff and Catherine are just this. While on earth they must pay the penalties for vengeance and accept the punishment of retribution. Their redemption is their union after death. This leads us into the theme of love.

The love one finds in this novel is literally a death-defying one. To Cathy, love is life itself. She does not love Heathcliff for his physical attraction alone, but because they are as one. Catherine's love is sexless although it is intense. It is as devoid of sensuality as the attraction that draws steel to a magnet. It is as lacking in tenderness as if it were hate. When she dies, she does not care whether her

death will make Heathcliff unhappy. She worries only lest it break the bond between them. If inconsolable anguish will keep him faithful to her, she is glad of it. When two people experience such a love, it overrides all faults of the loved one. Emily seems to believe that since their love is a natural force, it becomes evil only when it is repressed. This conception leads to the major theme of the novel.

The created cosmos is the expression of certain principles. These principles may be called storm--harsh, wild, dynamic, ruthless--and calm--gentle, merciful, passive, tame--or like and unlike. Emily is not interested in good and evil. Each principle is both good and evil, but when they are in their proper position, they constitute a harmony. In this novel, the two forces are symbolized by two houses and their occupants. Wuthering Heights is located on a bleak eminence, where it is exposed to the wind and weather. The word wuthering is a provincial adjective descriptive of tumult. The Earnshaws who live there are examples of energy and storm. In the lush valley below, is Thrushcross Park. Here reside the Lintons who express the principles of calm and settled assurance. When these two sets of principles are diverted from following their natural course, and get in each other's way, they are changed from positive to negative forces; the calm becomes a source of weakness and the storm merely a destructiveness. Emily has her characters act according to principles for which they are symbols. When, or if, they change their feelings toward one

another, they do not apologize; they simply accept the alteration as a natural occurrence. As long as each group follows its nature, they live in harmony. The disturbance and reestablishment of this harmony is the theme of the story. Emily adds a precipitating element when she brings Heathcliff into the story. He is a child of storm and this affinity between Cathy and him makes them love each other. Since he is an outside element, he is the force which disrupts the natural order. He causes conflict between Hindley and his father, and between Hindley and himself. The natural order is further disrupted by two unnatural marriages--Cathy and Edgar and Heathcliff and Isabella. Cathy's marriage and Hindley's treatment of him change Heathcliff from an alien element into a destructive force. He is not a wicked man yielding to his impulses, but a force acting involuntarily under the pressure of his own nature. Heathcliff and Cathy may be compared to two rivers that ought to flow into each other; but their courses are diverted; their proper channels dammed, and for Heathcliff the consequence is the destruction of anything that lies in his path. Not until he and Cathy are joined is the harmony restored.

However, it is not the grandeur of the theme that makes Wuthering Heights a great novel. After all, the theme is only a skeleton. It has to be clothed with flesh and blood before it acquires that breathing, individual life which distinguishes a work of creative art from a work of the intellect. Very few writers have an imagination powerful enough to clothe a story on the scale of Wuthering Heights.¹⁹

¹⁹David Cecil, Early Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), p. 178.

STYLE

Since style is the characteristic manner of expression in a work, or how a writer says what he has to say, the majority of critics agree that Emily's style is perfect for her purpose. The style of a work, which might be called the author's voice, may be analyzed in terms of diction or language usage and the use of figures of speech.

Emily uses the language of the people she knows. She qualifies this colloquial language by the reticence of her own personality. She is careful to refrain from screaming even at the moments of highest emotion. One way in which she enriches the language of her novel is by using figurative language.

Metaphoric language gives any style a special quality. Emily's images seem to relate man and nature to the atmospheric tumult, which we remember is the meaning of wuthering. These metaphoric expressions are never unusual:

Human conditions are like the activities of the landscape where rain floods, blasts wail, and the snow and wind whirl wildly. . . . A preacher 'pours forth his zeal in a shower'; Mrs. Dean rushes to welcome Lockwood. . . . Faces are like landscapes: Heathcliff's hands were beclouded with dirt. . . . Catherine had a 'sudden clouded brow' . . . Hareton grew 'black as a thundercloud'. . . . As important as the imagery of wind and clouds, and water is fire. Eyes burn with anguish; they flash and sparkle. Fury kindles; tempers kindle; shame burns;

fever consumes life; merriment expires quickly. . . .
 Most of the animals are wild. . . . Heathcliff is
 an evil beast; a fierce pitiless, wolfish man. . . .
 He growls and howls like a beast and is many times
 called a 'brute.'²⁰

These are but a few examples of her use of the metaphoric expression.

Her writing . . . sings, instinctively, carelessly, ignorantly: and at times she is both clumsy and amateurish. . . . She has no purple passages; no striking unusual metaphors; she never raises her voice.²¹

One is aware of the passage of time, but only a few of the important dates are called to our attention, and then not directly. The time covered in this novel is about thirty years. We are aware of the passage of time within the years by the mention of the changes of season. Another way we are made aware of the passage of time appears when Nelly Dean is telling Lockwood the story which serves as the plot of this novel. She will take along for a while; then she will stop her gossiping and leave for a time so that Lockwood will not become over tired. We can learn, with some mathematical computation, that Cathy and Edgar were married when she was eighteen. Less than one year later, she died. Although Emily does not give us this information directly, she does give us enough clues that we can answer these questions ourselves. This is another means by which Emily adds realism to her story.

²⁰Mark Shorer, Critiques and Essays on Modern Fiction, "Fiction and the Analogical Matrix" (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1952), pp. 88-89.

²¹Cecil, op.cit., p. 200.

In the preceding chapter, we discussed Emily's use of law. It would seem, since she was so careful to make sure that Heathcliff acted within the law, that Emily had a knowledge of law, and had a respect for it. She did not, however, make use of any tricky laws. The method that Heathcliff used was one that Emily and her neighbors would be familiar with.

Emily restricted the locale of this novel to a five-mile area. Wuthering Heights is located on the top of a wind-swept hill. About five miles away, in the valley below, is Thrushcross Park. All of the action she relates in this book takes place within these five-miles. We are almost unaware of the outside world. The only direct mention of the outside is a sign post pointing toward another town some distance away. Also, we realized that Heathcliff must go somewhere when he leaves the Heights for a three-year period, but Emily does not bother to tell us where he has gone. This would detract from the attention given to the direct locality.

Wuthering Heights is a remarkable novel. It is utterly unlike any other novel. The artistic expression is nearly flawless. It is the expression of an intensely individual fear of the nature of man and life. Let us close this section of the paper with the following quotation from W. Somerset Maugham's World's Ten Greatest Novels:

MILLERS FALLS
ERASE
CONTENT

But I have said enough. Wuthering Heights is not a book to talk about; it is a book to read. It is easy to find fault with it; it is imperfect; and yet it has what few novelists can give it, power. I do not know a novel in which the pain, the ecstasy, the ruthlessness, the obsessiveness of love have been so wonderfully described. Wuthering Heights reminds me of one of those great pictures of El Greco in which in a somber, arid landscape under dark clouds heavy with thunder, long, emaciated figures in contorted attitudes, spellbound by an earthly emotion, hold their breath. A streak of lightning flitting across the leaden sky, ²²gives a final touch of mysterious terror to the scene.

²²Maugham, op cit., p. 137.

CONCLUSION

Wuthering Heights is a book with a universal theme, a picturesque locale, a credible plot, and a vivid style; but more important it is a book with unforgettable characters. As we have shown in the body of this paper, the characters live the plot and the theme; and the style can not be effective except in relation to characters such as those in this book.

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